

CANADA,

A DESCRIPTION OF ITS

PRINCIPAL CITIES,

RIVERS, LAKES, &c.;

*Containing most useful information for
all classes of Emigrants,*

BEING PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

BY A COMMERCIAL MAN.

WHO HAS RESIDED IN CANADA.

MANCHESTER :

PRINTED BY W. LIVESLEY, CHURCH STREET,

1858.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

The EDITH *and* LORNE PIERCE
COLLECTION *of* CANADIANA



Queen's University at Kingston

C A N A D A,

A DESCRIPTION OF ITS

PRINCIPAL CITIES,

RIVERS, LAKES, &c.;

Containing most useful information for all
classes of Emigrants,

BEING PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

BY A COMMERCIAL MAN,

Who has resided in Canada.

~~~~~

MANCHESTER:

WILLIAM LIVESLEY, PRINTER, 4, CHURCH STREET,

1858.

---

PRICE TWOPENCE.

F 5012

1858

(22)

Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2012 with funding from  
Queen's University - University of Toronto Libraries

## OBSERVATIONS ON CANADA.

---

THE object in bringing these few pages before the public is to make them acquainted with one of England's most important Colonies, and to place within the reach of the most humble of those who wish to seek a new home in a foreign land, such information with regard to climate, labour, &c. as I have been able to collect during my residence in that, as yet, undeveloped but promising country.

There has certainly been much dispute as to which of our Colonies is the most suitable for the merchant or artisan; this is a question which I cannot well answer, but I will certainly vouch for what I may state here as being correct, and leave it to the consideration of my readers.

I took my passage by screw steamer in the early part of summer, and arrived at Quebec in fourteen days. Quebec is situated on the north shore of the River St. Lawrence, it is the second city in British America, its population being at present about 50,000 souls. The form of the city is nearly triangular, the plains of Abraham forming the base, and the rivers St. Lawrence and St. Charles, the sides; it is naturally and artificially divided into two parts, known as the upper and lower towns, the former of which is strongly fortified, and includes within its limits the citadel of Cape Diamond, the most formidable fortress in America, built on the summit of the magnificent rock of that name.\*

\* Those parties who are desirous of seeing this should make application to the Town Major, at the main guard house, from whom tickets of admission can always be obtained.

The Lower Town is built on a strip of land running at the base of the Cape and of the high ground upon which the Upper Town stands. A public garden of the Upper Town contains an elegant monument which was erected to the memory of Wolf and Montcalm, in 1827; the height of this monument is sixty-five feet, and the design is good. The line of fortifications enclosing the Citadel and the Upper Town is nearly three miles in length, mounted with guns of heavy calibre and about a mile from the city, fronting the plains of Abraham are four towers, which are intended to impede the advance of an enemy in that direction. There are five gates to the city, three of which Prescott, Palace, and Hope Gates communicate with the Lower Town, and two of which St. John's and St. Louis's Gates communicate with the suburbs of the same name.

I have no doubt that many are aware of Canada being in the seventeenth century a colony of France, it was ceded to Britain in 1763, when its population was only about 70,000; there is now a population of two millions. About two thirds of the inhabitants of Quebec and Montreal are of French origin, and that language is spoken as much as English, in fact, there are French as well as English newspapers published; notwithstanding this, it is no great drawback to a stranger if he does not speak French, as a great number of the business men speak English; that is to say, those who keep wholesale and retail stores.

After having made myself acquainted with Quebec I took my departure for Montreal, the journey is accomplished by means of large steam boats capable of accommodating about 1000 souls, the saloons of these boats are beautifully fitted up and the passage of 180 miles is only 10/0 for cabin, and 6/0 for deck; the journey occupies from twelve to fourteen hours. In



ascending the river St. Lawrence, as the traveller comes nearer Montreal the scenery is delightful, surrounded by nature in all her forms, arrayed on one side forests as yet undisturbed by the hand of man, on the other side fields of corn, &c. in the highest state of cultivation. Near the city are the massive stone built wharfs, which are in summer lined with ocean vessels; fronting and parallel to the wharfs are well built warehouses, hotels, and other large public buildings, the market house is certainly the most imposing and perhaps the best that can be found in America, it is the first building that strikes the eye of the traveller from the river, behind these buildings and skirting the banks of the river are the principal streets of the city, and at the back of the city is a picturesque mountain five or six hundred feet high, from which the city derives its name. St. Paul's street, the second from the river, has a very good appearance, and is the chief street for the wholesale trade; next comes Notre Dame-street, which is the chief for the retail trade, it is about a mile in length and there are many large and beautiful buildings in it, quite equal to what we have in England. In the centre of this street is the large French Cathedral, which was erected thirty years ago, and occupied nearly five years in building. This spacious building is in front of an handsome square, and is capable of accomodating 10,000 persons. The principal Protestant Church, called Christ's Church, was near this spot, it was however, destroyed by fire last winter. There are more English churches in different parts of the city and a few French Catholic places of worship, also several Scotch kirks, and chapels of various denominations. There was in 1851, at the lower end of Notre Dame-street, a very handsome public square, the buildings forming this were substantially built, amongst which was a first class hotel and an elegant theatre, but unfortunately the whole of

the square and the adjoining property was consumed by fire in the same year. The Infantry and Cavalry Barracks are opposite what was Dalhousie-square, and on the bank of the river. I may as well state here, that fires are very prevalent in Montreal, in fact, in Canada generally, owing to the houses being chiefly constructed of wood. The next principal street from the river, is Great St. James-street, in this are the Banks of Montreal, British North America, the City Bank, and the General Post Office, behind these is Craig-street, which is a good width and chiefly contains private dwellings; further up towards the back part of the city is Sherbrooke-street this is a good long street and contains all private dwellings, with their beautiful gardens in front, behind these is the large mountain already mentioned, and it is at the foot of this, that you have a magnificent view of the city; before closing my remarks on Montreal, I may say that, there is much to be seen in the city that is well worth the attention of the traveller who may have time at his disposal. Montreal is the largest city in Canada, and has a population of about 70,000 souls.

After having remained at Montreal a considerable time, I took my departure for Toronto, Canada West, near Montreal and further up the country the river St. Lawrence is greatly obstructed by rapids, to overcome which, Canals have for some time been completed on a very grand scale, allowing ocean vessels to proceed with cargoes to the great inland lakes. The journey can now be made to the upper province by railway, as well as steam boat in the summer; the navigation is closed during winter, in consequence of the severity of the climate, which I shall explain hereafter.



The Grand Trunk Railway which has only recently been completed, has done away with a great deal of that tedious travelling in the winter in open and closed sleighs, or sledges, and which occupies four to five days in going from Montreal to Toronto, a distance of 370 miles, whereas, the journey can now be made in about fourteen hours. As I left Montreal in the summer, I preferred taking my passage by water; the Canals through which the steam boats pass, between Montreal and Lake Ontario are about 40 miles long, the dimensions of the locks are about 210 feet long, 47 wide, and 10 feet deep; the Welland Canal between Lakes Ontario and Erie, is about 30 miles long, the locks are about 152 feet long, 27 wide, and 9 deep, by this the reader will see that there is a complete inland navigation from Quebec, not only to Western Canada, but to many parts in the Western States, situated on the great Lakes, Voyages can actually, and in fact have been made direct from Chicago, on Lake Michigan to Liverpool, a distance of about 5000 miles.

Kingston, which is at the head of the river St. Lawrence, is one of the principal cities of Canada, and has a very good appearance from the river; the passage from Montreal occupies 28 hours, the journey from Kingston down to Montreal is taken entirely through the river; the scenery along the banks enlivened by cascades, foaming rapids, and innumerable islands, better known as the thousand islands. Lake Ontario commences at Kingston, and the traveller is removed to another boat of larger dimensions built for the Lake. The passage through from Montreal to Toronto occupies altogether 46 hours, and the price including living on board, is only eight dollars equal to thirty two shillings sterling. Toronto is situated on a fine bay, and about 40 miles from the head of Lake

Ontario, it occupies a good position and is making rapid progress towards commercial greatness ; there are many fine warehouses and hotels which can be distinctly seen as you approach the city down the bay. Toronto ranks next to Montreal, in the import trade of the province. The streets are spacious and regular, King-street, which is the principal, is occupied by very handsome shops where all kinds of manufactured goods are exposed for sale ; Young-street contains the wholesale houses or dry goods stores. The public buildings are numerous and elegant, the University of Toronto, to which beautiful gardens are attached, Upper Canada College, the St. Lawrence Hall, where the offices of the corporation and the commercial News Room are kept ; the Court House, the Parliament Buildings, the Normal School, Trinity College, and the Banks of Upper Canada, British North America, Montreal, and Commercial Bank. Toronto is very much like an English City, in fact in all the Cities and Towns of Upper Canada, none but the English language is spoken ; the population is at the present time about 40,000 souls.

The city of Hamilton another of the principal cities of Upper Canada, is beautifully situated near Burlington Bay, at the head of Lake Ontario, and from its geographical position, and being the centre of the finest section of Canada, it must always be one of the most important and thriving places in the province. The city is well laid out on ground which rises gradually from Burlington Bay, the streets of which, St. James and King-streets are the principal, are very wide and contain many handsome stone buldings. The wholesale and retail business of Hamilton is very large, being the head quarters of several of the most extensive importing houses in Canada. The Great Western Railway being connected with the

American Lines, adds greatly to the wealth and importance of the city. The population of Hamilton is about 20,000 souls; it is distant from Montreal 408 miles, from Kingston 226 miles, and from Toronto 45 miles.

I shall now give the reader an idea what travelling by a Railway is like in Canada and the United States. I had occasion to go to Toronto again, in the depth of winter, (via United States) having crossed the river St. Lawrence from Montreal in a sleigh or sledge, to the railway station on the opposite bank of the river. I soon found myself comfortably seated, in a long carriage, capable of accomodating about sixty persons, each carriage having a row of seats on each side covered with crimson velvet, and so constructed as to accomodate the passengers to sit face to face, or back to back. There is also a stove in the middle of each carriage, and a closet and wash place in one corner. I passed through the States of Main, Vermont, New Hampshire, and New York, and arrived at the little Town of Manchester, in the vicinity of the great Falls of Niagara late at night, the second day after my departure from Montreal, having travelled a distance of 700 miles.

So much has been written and said of these celebrated Falls, it would almost seem presumptuous to do more than refer to them in the briefest terms possible; suffice it to say that they are situated on the River Niagara, which unites Lake Erie and Ontario; the former of which is about 500 feet above the level of the other. The stream between Lake Erie and the Falls, has a very rapid descent, which in the last half mile before it reaches them, is about 58 feet; a tremendous velocity is therefore attained by the mass of moving waters,

and in this state of rapid motion, it is precipitated over a rock of 150ft. in height, in a stream of about 2300ft. in width. The continued action of the water has worn away the rock into the form of a crescent, and portions are precipitated from time to time into the gulf beneath. No living thing can resist the force of the current for miles above the Falls, and should they by any misfortune become involved among the rapids, destruction is inevitable. A vapour of considerable density is constantly ascending from the surface of the water beneath the Falls, which in bright sunshiny weather reflects a beautiful rainbow, and in the winter becomes frozen upon the rocks and trees contiguous to the Falls, into the most varied imaginable forms of beauty. The chief hotel on the Canadian side is Clifton House, and there are other good hotels on the United States side.

After having visited the Falls, I took my departure by stage coach for the town of Lewiston, situated on the banks of the river Niagara. I then arranged to proceed by steam boat to Toronto, calling at Queens-town, and the town of Niagara. This portion of the River and Lake Ontario, are navigable during the winter months, and steam boats ply daily between Lewiston and Queen's Wharf, about a mile from the city of Toronto.

As I have now given a description of some of the principal cities of Canada and mode of travelling, I shall next proceed to give such information as will be most suitable for persons intending to emigrate. There is one great error that many people fall into by not taking particular care as to which place they select for a landing. Those persons who intend going to Canada

should always make arrangements to sail from Liverpool to Quebec, in March or April at latest; by doing so they arrive out at the time when labour is most in demand. I have known many persons who have sailed for New York or Boston, at the same time their actual destination has been Quebec; this is certainly a great loss of time and money. It is from 580 to 600 miles from the former places to the latter, which must be travelled by railway to Montreal, and from thence by river to Quebec. To those who prefer taking passage by steamer, I should strongly recommend to them the screw steam ships, Anglo Saxon, North American, and Indian, for good accomodation and quick passage. The passage money by these steamers including provisions, is £18 18 0, for first cabin, £15 0 0, for second cabin, and £8 8 0 for steerage.\* With regard to sailing vessels, I cannot recommend any in particular, but there are always a great many sailing from Liverpool to Quebec, about the beginning or middle of March.

Persons who intend embarking for Canada, should always take care and have as much clothing as they can afford to take, as it is 60 to 70 per cent higher there, than in England. The clothes intended for the summer should be very light, and those for the winter cannot be too warm. In summer the thermometer often rises to 90° or even 100°, and sometimes 120°. In winter I have known it to sink 35° below zero. The climate is certainly a subject of much importance; the cold I have experienced in winter is remarkably healthy owing to the dry, clear,

\* For full particulars, apply to ALLAN & GILLESPIE, Weaver's Buildings, Brunswick Street, Liverpool.



bracing atmosphere. Although I admit that it is very cold indeed at times, the inhabitants are always well prepared for it, having double doors and windows to their houses; these are taken off in the summer, but the windows are replaced by Venetian shutters. The length of the winter, is no doubt a very great drawback, as labour is then little in demand, and those that have not made provision for themselves, must inevitably suffer. At the same time I may say that it is the tradesman's own fault if himself and family have to run short, as his earnings in the summer if he has been industrious are quite sufficient to support them through the winter. The severity of the winter is very much exaggerated in England; throughout the greater part of the season, the cold in the open air is generally very pleasant, it is only for a few days that the degree of cold is uncomfortable; being there the whole of the most severe winter that has been known by the inhabitants for some years; I am thus able to write from experience. The first snow falls in Lower Canada, at the latter end of the month of November, or the beginning of December; in Upper Canada, it falls a few week's later. I have certainly experienced more disagreeable feelings from the easterly winds in spring or autumn in England, than I ever did in Canada during the winter; the fact of open sleighs or sledges being generally used, proves at once that the cold is anything but disagreeable. There is very soon a good beaten snow path on the principal roads of the country, and a good sleigh drive is really delightful; however it is necessary to be well wrapt up. January and February is decidedly the best months for good steady sleighing; the season lasts about a month longer in the lower, than in the Upper Province.



Thaws seldom occur in the Lower Province, and the snow disappears about the middle of April; in the Upper Province it disappears a month earlier.

Ploughing commences about the end of April, and cattle are put out to pasture early in May, and taken in for shelter at the end of October. Harvest begins early in August. The months of May and June, are very delightful, the days are not then disagreeably warm. The very hot days are in the months of July, and August; about noon the heat is very oppressive. I may mention here however, that the very hot weather does not continue for any length of time, say a week or ten days at most; the summers are hotter in Lower than in Upper Canada.

A great number of travellers from the United States, visit Canada in the summer, more particularly Montreal and Quebec. The French convents, churches, and cathedrals, are objects of special interest and attraction to these visitors.

There is what is called an Indian summer in Canada, which occurs generally from the middle of October, to the beginning of November. The weather during this time is really delightful, it may be compared to our spring, but the atmosphere is much clearer. The days are neither too warm nor too cold, which makes it very pleasant and refreshing after the oppressive heat of the summer.

The Canadian climate is remarkable for being favourable to health and longevity, there is not so much of ague as some people are led to believe; I do not remember having seen one case during all my travels. There is an absence of colds, coughs, asthmas and rheumatisms, that afflicts us at home so frequently.

The emigrant on arriving at Quebec, will experience much satisfaction in having attention shown, and good advice given to him by the government agent, A. C. Buchanan Esq., Hunt's Wharf, who is appointed chief Emigration Agent for Lower Canada, and stationed at Quebec, for the purpose of giving all information and advice gratis. Emigrant ships upon arriving about 35 miles below Quebec, are boarded by the authorities of the quarantine department, on an island of the St. Lawrence, called Grosse Isle. A medical officer examines the ship, as to the state of health of all on board, and those who are sick are taken on shore to a hospital. Mr. Buchanan is apprised of the approach of vessels with emigrants, and is in waiting to receive them in the river opposite Quebec on board the vessels, or at his office. Strangers ought not to believe any statements that may be made to them by parties who put themselves in their way, for the purpose of taking advantage of them. There are besides Mr. Buchanan, other agents at the following places: A. Coulon, Esq, Canal Wharf, Montreal; A. B. Hawke, Esq., Junr., Kingston; A. B. Hawke, Esq, Sen., Scott Street, Toronto.

Steamers leave Quebec for Montreal, every afternoon at 5 o'clock, calling at the town of Three Rivers, Port St. Francois and Sorel, and arrive at Montreal, from six to seven next morning. For those parties whose destination is further west, they can proceed on their journey without much loss of time, as there are several steam

boats sailing from Montreal every morning at 9 o'clock ; and I may here observe that great caution ought to be exercised in arranging for the passage, as there is much competition amongst the several steam boat companies, and care should be taken to avoid persons who crowd on board the boats, offering their services to secure a good and speedy passage. To those emigrating, who have made up their minds to go into the interior, or further up the Province, if they care little about sight seeing, or cannot afford to go on shore at Quebec, it would be much better to go direct from the ship's side in which they arrive, on board a steam boat ; by doing this they will save a considerable sum.

I should not recommend any person to take furniture on the voyage, as all kinds are to be had easily, in almost any part of the Province, the prices would be much lower than articles taken out, adding freight and risk of damage on the voyage. Carpenters, Mechanics, Shoemakers, and other tradesmen, ought always to take their tools, if they neglect doing this, they often miss an opportunity of being employed on their arrival. Ploughs and agricultural implements, can be had in Canada at reasonable prices.

It being my intention to give as much valuable information as possible in this small book, I shall next place before my readers, a list of prices for labour and provisions, also value of coins current in Canada.

## L A B O U R .

---

Warehousemen and Clerks, from £80 to £200 per annum, according to ability.

Joiners from 5/0 to 6/0 per day

Painters “ “ “ “ “ “

Bricklayers from 7/0 to 8/0 “

All kinds of labourers from 4/0 to 5/0

Stonemasons from 9/0 to 10/0 per day

Tailors “ 5/0 “ 6/0 “

Shoemakers “ “ “ “ “

Cabinetmakers “ “ “ “ “

Blacksmiths “ 7/0 “ 8/0 “

Mechanics “ “ “ “ “

Brickmakers “ 8/0 “ 10/0 “

Lime Burners “ 6/0 “ 8/0 “

Whitesmiths “ 5/0 “ 8/0 “

Wheelrights “ “ “ “ “

Carriage Builders “ “ “ . “

Horse and Cart for hire about 8/0 per day

Medical men charge high

## PROVISIONS, &c.

---

Butter 9d per pound

Eggs 4d to 6d per dozen

Potatoes 9d per peck

Apples 9d per peck

Wild Fruit in abundance for picking

Best Bread 4d for 4 pounds

Flour 20/0 per 196 pounds or 1/3 per doz.

Sugar 4d per pound

Candles 6d to 8d per pound

Tea 1/9 to 2/6 per pound

Honey 1/0 per pound

Currants 6d to 8d per pound

Milk 2d per quart

Tobacco 9d to 2/0 per pound

Beef 3d to 5d per pound

Mutton ditto ditto

Veal ditto ditto

Pork 5d per pound

Ham 6d per pound

Geese 1/0 each

Turkey weighing 28 pounds 4/0

Ducks 1/8 per pair

Fowls 1/3 per pair

Pigeons 1d each

Every thing else in like proportion

Clothing about 70 per cent higher than in England

## Value of Coins current in Canada

---

### ENGLISH,

|                 | £ | s. | d.              |
|-----------------|---|----|-----------------|
| Sovereign ..... | 1 | 4  | 4               |
| Crown .....     | 0 | 6  | 1               |
| Half Crown..... | 0 | 3  | 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| Shilling .....  | 0 | 1  | 3               |
| Sixpence .....  | 0 | 0  | 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ |

---

### AMERICAN.

|                      |   |    |   |
|----------------------|---|----|---|
| Eagle .....          | 2 | 10 | 0 |
| Half Eagle .....     | 1 | 5  | 0 |
| Dollar .....         | 0 | 5  | 0 |
| Half Dollar.....     | 0 | 2  | 6 |
| Quarter Dollar ..... | 0 | 1  | 3 |
| Dime .....           | 0 | 0  | 6 |
| Half Dime .....      | 0 | 0  | 3 |

---

### FRENCH.

|                       |   |   |   |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|
| Crown .....           | 0 | 5 | 6 |
| Half Crown.....       | 0 | 2 | 9 |
| Five Franc Piece..... | 0 | 4 | 8 |

---

### SPANISH.

|                     |   |   |    |
|---------------------|---|---|----|
| Dollar .....        | 0 | 5 | 0  |
| Quarter Dollar..... | 0 | 1 | 3  |
| Pistareen .....     | 0 | 0 | 10 |



It will thus be seen that living in Canada is much cheaper than in England, although clothing is dearer, it must also be borne in mind, that the price paid for labour is higher, again; rents are generally higher than they are in England, because labour and money bring better returns. The kind of accomodation which workmen with small families generally make shift with at first, may be had from 12/0 to 14/0 per month; or from about £8 to £9 per year. A respectable dwelling house containing parlour and kitchen, with three bed rooms, and cellar, may be had for £13 per year. An elegant cottage, containing dining, drawing rooms, parlour and several bed rooms, with garden attached may be had from £35 to £40 per annum.

Board and Lodging is decidedly cheaper than in England, and can be had from 8/0 to 12/0 per week including washing; and I have lived at a first class hotel for 20/0 sterling per week; the price generally charged in the hotels for each meal for travellers, is 1/3 to 2/0 according to the class, and in no instance has any one to pay in the shape of fees as in England, except 4d or 6d to the boots when staying over night.

It is true that advantages and disadvantages of our respective colonies have been much exaggerated, the consequence is, that few emigrate until things are in a very bad state with them at home. Having resided in Canada twelve months, and in the course of that time travelled much, I am thus able to speak from experience, those who undertake to give an account of a particular colony are certainly in a great measure responsible in a serious point of view; I would, however, have it understood, that I have not exaggerated, because by so doing, I might possibly mislead individuals, and be altogether concealing disadvantages. I have therefore, on my part given such information that would be the most interesting and useful and in a cheaper way than has ever been offered before to the public.

There is no doubt that events connected with political proceedings of Canada, have for some years back tended to retard its prosperity, but no country any more than Canada, is free from political commotions at times, and I am convinced that the time is approaching, when it will be better known and appreciated.

Having now given such information as I have thought most fit for those intending to emigrate, I shall now proceed to close this pamphlet. There is one great error which might arise, in supposing that the class of persons so abundant at home, and the least wanted, are just the people that should go out to this colony; this is really a wrong idea: I allude to those that have no particular occupation or calling, such as Irish labourers, hand or power loom weavers, &c.; these persons are totally unfit for the British American Provinces. It would certainly be a wise step on the part of our Government were they to be more interested in emigration to our North American Colonies, and grant free passages to those who are anxious to leave this country, and do better for themselves and families; for my own part I should be glad to see an end of the pauperism, that at present exists in England, and I feel satisfied that it might at least, be much diminished if we had more of that class of influential men who would put themselves in the right place.



